

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicants have studied the office action dated January 10, 2008 and have made the changes believed appropriate to place the application in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Applicants have canceled claims 14-49 without prejudice, to include claims 14-49 in a continuation application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that dependent claims 3, 11-13, 16, 24-26, 29, 37-39, 42, 47-49, 51-52 and 54 are allowable over prior art. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the allowable claims to incorporate the independent claims and any intervening claims. It is respectfully submitted that the objection to these claims should be withdrawn.

Although Applicants amended and cancelled claims, Applicants are not conceding in this application that the amended claims in their pre-amended form are invalid, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in this present application and one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

As set forth above, claims have been cancelled and amended to independent form. It is respectfully submitted that these amendments will not require a new search or raise new issues for consideration by the Examiner. It is submitted that these amendments place the claims in better form for appeal. These amendments were not presented earlier because they were deemed appropriate to advance prosecution after receipt of the latest Office Action. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to enter and consider these amendments after the final rejection.

In the statement of reasons for allowance the Examiner provided various reasons for allowance. Applicant notes that the claims are directed to various combinations of features. It is respectfully submitted that the patentability of each of the allowed and allowable claims resides in the combination of features recited in that claim in addition to any features noted by the Examiner.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims as unpatentable over U.S. pat. No. 6,098,074 to Connor et al. in view of U.S. pat. No. 6,453,319 to Mattis et al is moot.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicants submit that the pending claims 1-54 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have not added any claims. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 09-0466.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at (310) 553-7970 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

Dated: March 10, 2008

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